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MISCELLANY.

MEETING OF THE NATIONAL MUNICIPAL LEAGUE.

The second annual meeting of the National Municipal League, which was, at the same time, the Fourth National Conference for Good City Government, was held in Baltimore on May 6, 7 and 8, and brought together representatives of thirty-five civic associations from various sections of the country. As usual, a number of papers of a general character were presented. As regards the reports on municipal conditions, the southern cities were made the central feature of the program. It has been the policy of the League during the last few years to bring to these conventions reports on municipal conditions in different sections of the country. Each year a different group of states is selected. In this way the proceedings of the various conventions will give a general picture of the municipal conditions throughout the United States.

In the Annual Report of the Secretary of the League, Clinton Rogers Woodruff, an account of the progress of reform during the last year was presented. One of the significant facts which this report emphasized is the rapid increase of civic associations, founded for the purpose of effecting reform in municipal administration. In the North Atlantic group, there were 27 such associations in 1894; 79 in 1895; and 121 in 1896; in the South Atlantic, 2 in 1894; 13 in 1895; and 17 in 1896; in the Northern Central, 14 in 1894; 54 in 1895; and 78 in 1896; in the Southern Central, none in 1894; 7 in 1895; and 15 in 1896; in the Western States, 2 in 1894; 23 in 1895; and 36 in 1896. The work of these associations is making itself felt in local elections and in some cases, as, for example, in Baltimore, Buffalo and Syracuse they have controlled the local elections or dictated the candidates. The report dwelt at some length upon the progress of municipal civil service reform. In this respect the eastern cities are still far ahead of the West, although the recent Civil Service Reform Act of Illinois as applied to Chicago constitutes a great step in advance.

At the afternoon session of Wednesday, May 6, Charles Morris Howard, described the results of the recent reform movement in Baltimore,* and Merritt Starr, read a paper on "Chicago Since the

* See ANNALS, May, 1896, "Notes on Municipal Government" for description of this movement.

Adoption of Civil Service Reform." In the evening, James C. Carter, of New York City, delivered the president's annual address. Mr. Carter dwelt upon the close alliance between municipal and state politics, holding that this close connection and the opportunity for political manipulation which it afforded, were at the root of municipal mismanagement. He argued strongly for the complete separation of local and municipal politics.

The morning session of Thursday, May 7, was devoted to a discussion of the relation of the municipality to quasi-public works, with special relation to the street railway service. Frank M. Loomis, of Baltimore, read a paper, arguing strongly against municipal ownership. Mr. Loomis pointed out the dangers which the extension of municipal functions must necessarily bring; the increased possibilities of patronage and corruption. The paper of Mr. Richardson, of Philadelphia, which followed that of Mr. Loomis, strongly advocated municipal ownership. The contention of Mr. Richardson was that the gigantic corporations controlling the franchises of the city, constituted one of the gravest menaces to the honesty of municipal administration. He showed that the interest of stockholders in such companies acted as an obstacle to the proper control of such corporations. William M. Salter, of Philadelphia, presented a paper on the same subject, emphasizing the duties of such corporations to the public and to their employees. The afternoon session of May 7 was devoted to reports on the municipal condition of Richmond, Va.; Atlanta, Ga.; Nashville and Memphis, Tenn. The favorable comment on the administration of these cities was somewhat of a surprise to the convention, especially when compared with the pessimistic reports which the convention has been accustomed to hear from representatives of northern and western cities.

The session of May 8 was occupied with papers on general municipal problems. Frederick William Holls presented a paper on "State Boards of Municipal Control," a subject to which he has given special attention. Mr. Holls' plan has been incorporated in a bill submitted to the legislature at its last session.* In addition, the following papers were presented: "The Reform of Our Municipal Councils," by Henry W. Williams, of Baltimore; "Should Municipal Legislators Receive a Salary?" by James W. Pryor, Secretary of the City Club of New York; "Shall We Have One or Two Legislative Chambers?" by Samuel B. Capen, President of the Boston Municipal League, and John A. Butler, President of the Milwaukee Municipal League; "The Necessity of Excluding Politics from Municipal Business," by Colonel

*See ANNALS for March, 1896, "Notes on Municipal Government," p. 178.

George E. Waring, Chief of the Bureau of Street Cleaning, New York City. Of these, the paper by Colonel Waring was of special interest, as it contained an admirable exposition of the effect of eliminating politics from the administration of municipal departments. The opposition which was encountered, the perseverance and determination of the head of the street cleaning department of New York City, and the success of the reform principles, offered the most encouraging prospects for similar work in other cities.

At the afternoon session of Friday, May 8, the following papers were read: "Municipal Condition of Springfield, Massachusetts," by George A. Denison, of Springfield; "Municipal Condition of Albany, New York," by Hon. John Boyd Thatcher, Mayor of Albany; "Municipal Condition of Pittsburg," by George W. Guthrie, of Pittsburg; "Christian Citizenship Leagues," by Rev. Albert G. Lawson, D.D., of Camden.

In addition to the valuable information which is brought together at these meetings, the contact with those who are engaged in this work throughout the country, and the mutual help and encouragement which this contact brings with it, constitute one of the most important and valuable features of these conventions.

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